

## MATCH OF THE CATALOG

### "Business Uses CALMAX to Collect Computers Along the Information Superhighway"

By Ken Decio, CALMAX Co-Coordinator

David K. West knows computers...in fact, he calls himself the "Circuitboard Witchdoctor." David is the owner of The Executive Suite, a Chico-based business that recovers computers and electronic scrap throughout the Sacramento Valley. David calls on businesses that have outdated or inoperable computers. His customers include numerous State and federal agencies, universities, banks, insurance, manufacturing, and computer service companies. He gradually fills his truck with old computers as he makes his way back to Chico each week. David also employs three full-time contractors that collect computers and scrap out the materials at their shops.

The backbone of his business is recovering mainframe computers for resale or recycling. He also collects circuit boards to recover precious metals such as gold, silver, platinum, and palladium. David says he does not use cyanides or acids to recover the metals. Instead, he employs a mechanical method to extract and "hygrade" the metals to sell to smelters.

David has obtained many computers and a variety of electronic equipment by advertising in CALMAX. David has been utilizing CALMAX since 1993 and estimates that he recovers over 750 tons of computer equipment each year through the program. He averages 15 calls per month through CALMAX, and although he advertises in other publications, he says, "I don't think there has been a better resource than CALMAX."

With the help of CALMAX, David also collects large quantities of personal computers (PC) which he donates to schools in Northern California. The majority of PCs he collects are 8088s, 286s, and 386s which are slower, older

computers compared to the "pentiums" now for sale. Companies usually donate these computers to David because they know the computers will be sent to schools and they can also save on disposal and hauling costs. David will only donate computers to schools that have teachers or parents capable of testing, rebuilding, reformatting, or cannibalizing parts to create operating computers. As David says, "I don't plug in the computers to see if they work."

David also provides donated computers and equipment to



Computerlink, a nonprofit organization located at the former Army Depot in Sacramento. Computerlink trainees refurbish and upgrade donated computers and distribute them free of charge to California public schools. David enjoys donating computer equipment to Computerlink because he feels it is a win-win situation:

schools receive badly-needed computers while trainees develop marketable skills to help them lead more productive lives.

Because David travels constantly to collect computers, he values spending time with his family in Chico and believes in giving back something to the community. Since he is not the type to coach little league, David feels that by donating computers to schools, he is giving something back to society while earning a living. We at CALMAX agree.

David's business illustrates how CALMAX can help businesses find low-cost materials, divert "waste" from landfills, and provide schools with computers to equip students for the 21st century. Now that's just what the "witchdoctor" ordered!